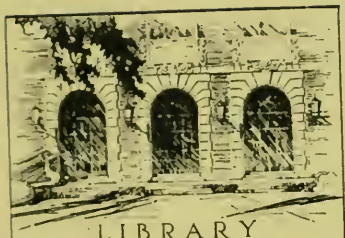

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NAVAL DEFENCES.

A LETTER

TO THE

LIVERPOOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

Pointing out the Inaccuracies contained in an Address by

MR. FORWOOD, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty.

BY

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET,

SIR THOMAS SYMONDS, G.C.B.

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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE LIVERPOOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

—o—

Dear Sir,

1.—A report of a meeting of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, dated July 9th, 1888, including an address by Mr. Forwood, M.P., has just reached me by post. The statements of Mr. Forwood, as reported, are so inaccurate and misleading, that I feel bound in the interests of my country to point them out, and to prove by official documents that they are not based on fact.

2.—Mr. Forwood begins by stating that he will confine himself "as closely as possible to a statement of facts and to avoid political or professional controversy." I claim the same position, and will confine myself to facts refuting to the best of my ability some of Mr. Forwood's assertions after quoting his words, as follows—

3.—"All are agreed that we require, as a minimum, a Navy sufficient in extent and power to overmatch the naval forces of any combination of hostile foreign powers that can be reasonably anticipated." I concur in this assertion though a question might be raised as to the interpretation of the expression "reasonably anticipated."

4.—Mr. Forwood states—"Money should be regarded as nothing as compared with the safety of the country." Here again I agree with Mr. Forwood. Before proceeding to point out the inaccuracies in Mr. Forwood's statements of the relative strength of all naval powers, I must here remark that after declaring that money is no object as compared with the safety of the country, he immediately criticises Sir G. Hornby's requirements, chiefly on the ground of their expense, so that the question narrows itself to this, are Sir G. Hornby's requirements necessary for our safety? I propose to prove that they are. In addition to the expense for

material, Mr. Forwood brings forward the difficulty of manning so large a fleet. But it would not be necessary to man the whole at the same time, and by a judicious transfer of men a great economy might be effected. And I agree entirely with Sir G. Hornby's estimate of the necessary numerical superiority.

5.—Mr. Forwood states, "I hope that in all I have said no one will imagine that for one moment would I allow this country to risk the loss of the command of the sea." Here I must enter my protest, and endeavour to show that this assumed superiority of which Mr. Forwood boasts is already gone. Even French Admirals state that they would not have a moment's anxiety in entering into battle with us, and I grieve to be obliged to agree with them. The structure of their ships is superior in armour, their guns are all breechloaders, whilst we have 49 armour-clads and 17 cruisers, 66 in all, which have muzzle-loaders, see Parliamentary Return, June 12th, 1888—unfit to load a second time within machine-gun fire, which is no difficulty to the breechloader, with which all the French ships are armed. Again he says—

6.—"An increase in the number of vessels to be laid down far in excess of the normal yearly ship-building programme, is fraught with danger." This may be true, for the French excel us in gun-making and in general progress of science. We are only now beginning to experiment on the new explosives with which the French have been for some time familiar.

7.—Mr. Forwood declares "The policy that is being pursued by the Board of Admiralty is, I believe, the only safe and sure one, if we are to increase the power and strength of the navy, and at the same time have ships possessing all improvements developed from year to year."

I protest against this assertion, because war may break out before our provisions for safety are carried out, and therefore the policy is neither safe or sure; and I repeat, for reasons which I will presently give, that our battleships should be as two to one, and our cruisers as three to one. And in respect of Mr. Forwood's declaration, that "already we are superior to any reasonable contingencies that may arise, &c." I am constrained to meet it with a

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direct contradiction which I will presently support with facts admitted on all sides.

He says—"Several of our ships are of an obsolete type, but the same may be said as regards the vessels of our neighbours."

This again is probably true, but the inference, decidedly false. An obsolete ship is of more comparative value to the French than to us, since, in case of war, they would have the protection of their harbours, whilst ours would have to keep the sea.

His remark that—"An expenditure of 29 millions against 19 millions," would infer an adequate superiority on our side, if the duties of the French and English fleets were the same—but when we consider the enormous amount of mercantile shipping we should have to protect, the value of Mr. Forwood's remark is very much reduced.

I have now exhausted my quotations, and proceed to the best of my ability to show the dangerous fallacy of many of Mr. Forwood's assertions.

In Mr. Forwood's lists of both Navies he mixes battleships with armoured cruisers, which is contrary to the plan adopted in Parliamentary Return, June 12th, 1888, and very misleading. The Cruisers being intended for the protection of trade, and not for the line of Battle. *Imperieuse* was intended for a cruiser and turned into a battleship, being found unfit for the purposes for which she was originally intended. She, as well as *Orlando* are now flag ships. *Imperieuse* drawing 29ft. water could not pass through the Suez Canal, thence is not a fit cruiser.

He states at p. 18—"To-day we have forty armoured vessels ready for service and thirteen completing, and France has twenty-three ready and seven building." This is perhaps the most misleading passage in his speech, for 40 armoured vessels are not "ready for service" as is proved by referring to Parliamentary Return, number 218, p. 3, where it is shown that *Thunderer* and *Superb* require "repairs, rearming, new engines," etc., etc. See Navy Estimates, 1888—89, p. 174. Thus the 40 "ready" are reduced to 38. Of the French, building, there are 8 with *Brennus*, not 7! Of those complete 29 instead of 23, if the 6 Battleships miscalled

"Coast Defence," are treated as their inferiors, *Hotspur*, *Rupert*, *Belleisle*, *Orion*, *Penelope*, *Iron Duke* are on Mr. Forwood's and Admiralty List, June 12th, 1888.

Thus Mr. Forwood overrates the English 40 by 2 "not ready" and underrates the French by 6 ready and one Croiseur Blindé building—result 38 English to 30 French.

In the report on the French Navy Estimates 1888, dated December 1887, at p. 22, *Brennus* is thus described.—"Armament, p. 23,—Armour compound—surrounding the vessel without interruption—(*no unarmoured ends*!)—height at least two metres, armoured deck, cofferdams, raft system, speed 18 knots. The French propose to expend 200,000 journées on this new armour-clad, and at p. 131, the money expenditure for 1888 is given! Such an armour-clad is omitted by the Secretary of the Admiralty, and we begin nothing to meet her, but reduce estimates and workmen! Again, *Dupuy de Lome* is contained in Mr. Forwood's *unarmoured* cruiser list, p. 28! also in 218. Whilst in p 20, *Valeur de la Flotte* (French Navy Estimates' Report, Dec. 1887,) she is styled "Un Croiseur, Blindé de 1ere Classe. Steel armour belt from end to end, and a steel armoured deck; cofferdams; very numerous compartments; speed 20 knots. They propose to spend 50,000 "journées on this vessel in 1888." But this period of preparatory works passed, the greatest activity possible is to be used. Three years and a-half should suffice to place the vessel in condition to go to sea." He does not name 9 "Torpilleurs de haute-mer," speed 22 knots, the best of home cruisers and the most terrible scourges possible to our channel commerce. These are named at p. 122, "Valeur réelle des bâtiments au 1er Janvier, 1888,"—*Baluy*, *Challier*, *Capitaine Cuny*, *Mehl*, *Dehorter*, *Deroulède*, *Doudart de Lagreé*, *Bouët Willanmey*, *Edmond-Fontaine*.

On his list are English vessels whose keels are not laid down. The 6 French *turrets omitted* have a very superior armament, Guns, breech-loaders, while the English vessels below named have a comparatively paltry armament, Guns muzzle-loaders, etc., etc. *Even* Brassy writes of the six French turrets, see vol I. p. 168. *Note.*—"It should perhaps be pointed out, that it is intended by the use of the term 'coast service vessel' in the text to connote a class capable of rather more extended employment than would be expressed by the words 'coast defence vessels.' *Like our*

own Hotspur and Rupert, the former could proceed to, and be employed on, an enemy's coast."

The Admiralty misinterpret the French heading "garde-côtes-cuirassés. *It is as incorrect as misleading*, that while *Hotspur Rupert, Bellisle, Orion, Penelope*, and *Iron Duke*, are placed on the list of battleships, the French *superior* vessels are omitted. These misrepresentations are actually on the Admiralty Return to Parliament, No. 218, June 12th, 1888. *Just issued.* The six French turrets in question are also more modern in date, three carry 48-ton guns, two have 20in. and 18in. armour, &c.

Yet Mr. Forwood says "My desire has been simply to state facts." But this does not complete the misstatements.

The following is a statement of various particulars of six French turret ships, 'Garde-côtes Cuirassés,' not, *only* '*coast defence vessels*, and six corresponding English vessels on the sea-going list of *Battle ships*—and one armoured cruiser.

FRENCH MISCALLED "COAST DEFENCE VESSELS, ARMOURED."

Names.	Tonnage.	B.L. Armament.	Armour.	Speed.	Date of Launch.
French Furieux	5,700	2—13.4 (48 tons)	20in.	14 knots	1883
„ Tonnére	5,700	2—10.6	13 „	14 „	1875
„ Fulminant	5,600	2—10.6	13 „	13.2 „	1877
„ Vengeur	4,523	2—13.4 (48 tons)	13 „	10.8 „	1878
„ Tonnant	4,707	2—13.4 (48 tons)	18 „	11 „	1880
„ Tempête	4,523	2—10.6	13 „	12 „	1876
	5,126 average.		15in.	12.6	

SIX ENGLISH VESSELS AS A COMPARISON: MISCALLED "BATTLE-SHIPS,"

while the French above are on an inferior list !

		M.L.			
Orion	4,870	4—12	12in.	12.8	1879
Belleisle	4,870	4—12	12 „	12.2	1876
Rupert	5,440	2—10	11 „	13.6	1872!
Hotspur	4,010	2—12	11 „	12.6	1870!!
*a*Penelope	4,470	8— 8!	8 „	12.7	1867!!
*d*Iron Duke and four others.	6,010	10— 9	8 „	12.5	1870!!!
	4,945 average		10in.	12.8	

The Admiralty returns do not give thickness of armour. I have therefore followed Lloyd's. Of Mr. Forwood's 40 "*ready*" *Penelope* (*a*) is said to be only fit to be at the Cape as guard ship. *Iron Duke* (*d*), and four others badly armed broadside vessels could have *no chance* with *any* of the six French above.

The result of a battle between the above six French turrets and two English turrets, besides four broadside vessels can only end in our defeat. Handling being equal, they ought to knock them to pieces in a few minutes, and none of our other *broadside* vessels, 25 in number, ought to have a chance of success against either of the six French "Garde-côtes Cuirassés" (*omitted by Mr. Forwood*), all else being equal. We are quite wrong in repairing *Superb* and *Achilles*, *Hector* or any *broadside* vessel, which can have no possible chance against a decent turret.

Whilst *Brennus* is omitted by Mr. Forwood as an armour-clad, and styled in last Parliamentary list "ordered to be built," it is stated of our *Blake* "designs not yet decided in detail," also no engines for *Vulcan*, *Barrosa*, *Barraconta*, *Blanche*, *Blonde*, *etc.*

The mistakes alluded to above do an incalculable mischief by over-rating our naval strength.

Whilst Lord George Hamilton calls one like me "a most pessimist alarmist" (see *Times*, March 22nd, 1888,) for striving to expose facts for the good of my country, I feel bound to declare that the optimist course is certain *to ruin* us in a measurable time.

Mr. Forwood's List of Cruisers. In Parliamentary return, June 12th, 1888, No. 218, the same dangerous misleading farce is pursued by calling the French *Dupuy de Lome* "*an unarmoured cruiser*," see p. 14. Although the French "Valeur de la Flotte," Dec. 1887, styles her "Blindé," a document as public as our estimates, and can readily be purchased. Mr. Forwood crowds his list of cruisers with eleven vessels under 14 knots speed. Omitting these as too slow, his result is French 27, English 35, of speed over 14 knots. I add nine French "Torpilleurs de haute mer," speed 22 knots, making 35 English, 36 French. The nine French

named, p. 122, "Torpilleurs de haute mer" (styled in 218 "*boats*") are the perfection of Channel Commerce destroyers. *I most certainly cannot say that our commerce "could be efficiently protected." On the contrary, its destruction is certain and prepared for.*

The coaling of our war ships, the keeping their bottoms clean, with insufficient dock-accommodation, and keeping the engines in repair, for racing speed, necessitates even more than two Battle ships for one and three Cruisers to one French vessel, as the duty of our ships to keep the sea, is in no way obligatory with them.

The Decadence of the British armour-clad Navy dates from June, 1873, when the armour clads of

England were	36 Iron Armour Clads and 14 wood	}	Total 53
„ Building	3 „ „ „	}	
France ...	3 Iron „ „ 31 wood	}	„ 41
„ Building	3 „ „ „ 4 wood	}	

The above from Admiralty Official sources.

Abstract—England 39 Iron, 14 wood, grand total 53
„ France 6 „ 35 „ „ 41

It would be almost correct to say the English Fleet was in 1873 iron.
„ „ „ the French „ „ wood.

By Parliamentary Return, June 12th, 1888, the armoured Fleet was comparatively

English, 2 wood, 40 Iron, 12 Coast Defence, total 54
7 Building 7
61

French :—

Armour Clads, 1888, 9 iron, 13 wood, 14 mis-called "Coast Defence" (6 formidable turrets, 8 gunboats), iron and 5 wood.

Total 23 iron, 18 wood
8 iron building.

31 18 Grand total 49.

English total 61 59 Iron, 2 wood.
French „ 49 31 Iron, 18 wood.

It does not need much wisdom to see that the French have built an Iron Fleet since 1873, so to say, instead of wood.

But the English have *really* only 17 *modern* Iron Armour Clads, *three of which are armed with muzzle-loaders*, and nine armoured Cruisers, total 26.

The French have 32 *modern* Iron Armour Clads, including 8 gunboats, and one armoured Cruiser. Total 33.

The rest are in truth obsolete on both sides.

Why Return 218 is made to style as French "Coast Defence Vessels, armoured," 6 formidable turrets, *far* superior to 10 on the English *battle* lists, I cannot conceive.

Refuges for French Commerce Destroyers.

The *new* French ports Calais, Bolougne, Havre, months of the Seine, improvements to Cherbourg, Brest, Toulon, &c. &c., will very much assist such destructions, being shelters for commerce destroyers, and a menace to our commerce. 64,000.000 francs has just been approved by the Chambers for the above purpose.

"From our Correspondent, Paris, Nov. 8th, 1887.

"A Bill was submitted to the Chamber to-day by the Govern-
"ment for the enlargement of Havre Harbour and the improvement
"of navigation on the Lower Seine. The outlay is 95,000,000f.,
"the Havre and Rouen Chambers of Commerce paying 24,000,000f.
"and lending to the State, free of interest, the remaining
"72,000,000f just voted for improvements." *We look on and do nothing!*

Our Personnel is also dangerously few in number comparatively, remembering that the French use "conscription," while we are all volunteers.

I have now pointed out many of the inaccuracies of Mr. Forwood's statements. I am quite certain of my facts and challenge an examination of them. My only object being by publishing the truth to induce my countrymen to look more narrowly, in time, to their safety, by preparing a strong navy, before too late. It takes three years to build an armour clad.

Historical Conclusion.

As I am addressing the members of the Chamber of Commerce of the Chief Mercantile Port in the world, I will endeavour as briefly as I can to acquaint them with the 'History' of the case, and what the French promise us in future. "History of the French Revolution," Alison, Vol. IV., page 648, states that the English had in 1793, 153 sail of the line and 133 frigates. The French had 83 and 77. James gives the numbers Vol. II., page 52, British liners 158, French 82, and yet we were out-numbered in every general battle.

If Toulon had not been given to us that year, it would have been one of our saddest years, for parsimony had reduced our Fleet below prudence, as proved during the remainder of 22 years' most successful naval war (although Toulon and 20 ships of the line, &c., fell into our hands). We had increased our Fleet by 1813 to 244 line of battleships, and 570 cruisers.

Our trade, colonies, &c., were small fractions of what they are now, and our sailors, from sea experience, were as superior as possible to the French. Besides, Great Britain could feed her population. Now steam has equalised the value of the men, which has to be *proved*. The feeding our people has incalculably increased our naval responsibility. The French Navy is superior to ours in force, from better battleships, and the cruisers are too nearly equal. 66 of our vessels are armed with muzzle-loading *obsolete* guns.

Moreover the duties of our Navy are incalculably more onerous than the French, and if we take History as our guide, it appears that in 1807, after the treaty of Tilsit, we fortunately had 206 battle-ships to face a combination of Europe's 180, of which France had 60 !—see Jomini '*Vie de Napoleon*' ii. p. 449, who gives the names of the nations and number of ships. *England could then feed her people, now not half*! The increase of our wealth, trade, colonies, etc., etc. is enormous, nevertheless Europe has now according to "Brassey," 232 armour-clads, of which 49 are French to England's 61. From the above it is perfectly clear that we ought now to keep a Navy equal to any

combination and far superior to the French alone, or risk the loss of everything.

I have no hesitation in stating that our politicians are (with their eyes open) ensuring in our case disgrace to our flag and perfect ruin to the country in case of a French war, by understating the facts.

In 1801, Alison states, we had 202 sail of the line, and 277 frigates. Observe the enormous increase—French 39 and 35, we were nearly 6 to 1. After the occupation of Toulon; of Battles, 1st June, /94, St. Vincent, Camperdown, The Nile, etc., etc., in all which we were outnumbered!

Vol. XVI., Alison p. 324, Directory decree, 19th June, 1796, "Neutral sailors found on board English vessels *should be put to death!*"

Our forefathers, wisely continued to increase the Navy until in 1813, when it consisted of 244 sail of the line, and 227 frigates.

"Imperial decree Nov. 18th, 1810, created Provost Marshals for the summary punishment of all Custom-house officers, etc., etc., as far as sentence of death; to any one who should connive at the introduction of British Merchandise."

Alison p. 359, Vol. VI.—"So it was a question which persecuted British trade most barbarously the French republic, or Emperor!"

In p. 377.—"Bales of English goods, of great extent, were publicly burnt in all the chief cities or countries under French influence!"

In p. 465.—"Treaty of Tilsit, 1807. If England refused the proffered mediation of Russia, the whole maritime forces of the Continent were to be employed against her and they could muster 180 sail of the line, in a few years this force could be raised to 250." "The 180 vessels were French ships of the line 60, Spanish 40, Russian 25, Swedish 15, Dutch 15, Danish 15, Portuguese 10 = 180." Fortunately Great Britain possessed 206. More than three times the French!

Alison Vol. X. pp. 1064, 5, 1815.—"The great effect of the wars of the French revolution, was the aggrandisement of the

Colonial empire of England. If we contemplate the manner in which during the early years of the contest, the strength of England was paralysed by the miserable parsimony which had starved its naval and military forces in former years (*as in* 1888), we may well feel astonishment. During the course of this long continued struggle the British Navy obtained a decisive superiority in every sea, and the British commerce gradually acquired an extension unparalleled in any former age of the world."

I believe that I have shown above how the British Navy, when not starved, ensured the safety of the Nation, extended its trade, the true wealth of our Islands, its Colonies, etc., etc. How barbarous the French Republic and Empire were to our Trade, and below is what we are promised if we continue in a course of wickedly mad parsimony to the Navy.

The above mentioned, which has been my constant study through a long sea service, and my Tactical knowledge of Naval combats leave me no possible escape from the certainty that the least that can make the British Empire at all safe is to increase our battle ships to twice those of France, and the cruisers to thrice her cruisers, also that with the Navy as it is, defeat is *certain* and the ruin of our food supply and commerce is inevitable.

Future treatment by France victorious. *Remember what follows.* —In the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, March 15th 1882. "The empire of the sea will belong to that nation "of the two which has the most numerous armoured fleet. "Every power of attack and destruction will be employed against "all England's littoral towns—fortified or unfortified—whether "purely peace establishments or warlike—to burn them, to destroy "them, or to pitilessly ransom them.' 'In any future war the French "will come down from the heights of that cloudy sentimentality, "which has created the monstrous association of words—rights of "war (*les droits de la guerre*) and the attack on every source of "riches will become not only legitimate, but obligatory upon them." *—By Rear-Admiral Aube, of the French Navy, late Minister of Marine.*

Copy of Mr. Forwood's List, with N.B. added.*

(p. 25.)

ARMOURED SHIPS COMPLETED.

(LAID DOWN PRIOR TO 1877-78.)

ENGLISH.					FRENCH.			
NAME.	Year launched.	Year finished.	Tons.	Speed.	NAME.	Year launched.	Tons.	Speed.
Black Prince	1861	1862	9210	13.6	Heroine (*a*)	1863	5887	13.0
Agincourt	1865	1868	10690	14 8	Océan (*a*)	1868	7500	13.7
Bellerophon	1865	1866	7550	14 2	Marengo (*a*) ...	1869	7900	13.5
Northumberland	1866	1868	10780	14.1	Suffren (*a*)	1870	7600	14.3
Penelope.....	1867	1868	4470	12.7	La Galissonnière	1872	4700	13.1
Monarch	1868	1869	8320	14.9	Friedland	1873	8300	13.3
Hercules	1868	1868	8680	13.6	Richelieu (*a*) ...	1873	9100	13.1
Audacious	1869	1870	6010	13.2	Colbert (*a*)	1875	8400	14.4
Invincible	1869	1870	6010	13.8	Victorieuse (*a*)...	1875	4600	12.7
Iron Duke	1870	1871	6010	12.5	Trident (*a*)	1876	8800	14 1
Hotspur	1870	1871	4010	12.6	Redoutable ...	1876	9200	14 6
Swiftsure	1870	1872	6910	13.7	Triomphante (*a*)	1877	4700	12 9
Triumph	1870	1873	6640	13.5	Thétis	1877	3621	12.0
Sultan	1870	1871	9290	13 5	Dévastation	1879	10100	15.1
Devastation	1871	1873	9330	13.8	Turenne	1879	6400	14.1
Thunderer	1872	1877	9330	13 4	Admiral Duperré	1879	11100	14.2
Rupert	1872	1874	5440	13.6	Bayard	1880	6000	14.5
Alexandra	1875	1877	9490	15.0				
Dreadnought.....	1875	1879	10820	14.2				
Shannon	1875	1877	5390	12.3				
Northampton.....	1876	1878	7630	13.2				
Nelson	1876	1881	7630	14.0	*a* Hulls of wood.			
Inflexible	1876	1881	11880	13.8				
Temeraire	1876	1877	8540	14.6				
Agamemnon	1879	1883	8660	13.0				
Ajax	1880	1883	8660	13.0				

In addition, the following English vessels are considered capable, after repairs, of further service:—"Achilles," "Hector;" and, in addition, we have laid up the "Warrior," "Defence," "Valiant," "Lord Warden." "Repulse;" and the French have the "Savoir," "Revanche," and "Montcalm."

—o—

*N.B. — "Superb" and "Thunderer" are being re-engined.—"Minotaur" is unaccounted for. THOMAS SYMONDS.

Copy of Mr. Forwood's List, with Omissions added.*

(p. 26)

ARMOURED SHIPS COMPLETED.

(LAID DOWN OR PURCHASED SINCE 1877-78.)

ENGLISH.					FRENCH.			
NAME.	Year launched.	Year finished.	Tons.	Speed.	NAME.	Year launched.	Tons.	Speed.
Neptune	1874	1881	9310	14.1	Terrible	1881	7200	14.5
Superb	1875	1880	9170	13.2	Courbet	1881	9700	15.0
Belleisle !	1876	1878	4870	12 2	Vauban	1882	5900	14 0
Orion	1879	1881	4870	12.8	Indomptable	1883	7200	14.5
Conqueror !	1881	1886	6200	15.5	Duguesclin	1883	5900	14.0
Edinburgh	1882	1887	9420	15.4	Caïman	1885	7200	14.5
Colossus	1882	885	9420	15.4				
Collingwood	1882	1887	9500	16.4				
Imperieuse	1883	1886	8400	16.7				
Warspite	1884	1888	8400	16.7				
Rodney	1884	1888	10300	16.7				
Benbow	1885	1838	10600	16.7				
Hero	1885	1888	6200	15.5				
Orlando	1886	1888	5600	18.5				

*Omitted 6 French. T. Symonds.

Name.		Launched.	Tons.	Speed.
Furieux	...	1883	5700	14
Tonnére	...	1875	5700	14
Fulminant	...	1877	5600	13.2
Venguer	...	1878	4523	10.8
Tonnant	...	1880	4707	11
Tempé	...	1876	4523	12

ARMOURED SHIPS COMPLETING.

Howe	1885	incomplete.	10300	16.7	Admiral Baudin	1883	11380	15.0
Camperdown	1885	,,	10600	16.7	Formidable	1885	11380	15.0
Undaunted	1886	,,	5600	18.5	Requin	1885	7200	14.0
Narcissus	1886	,,	5600	18 5	Hoche	1886	10581	15.0
Anson	1887	,,	10600	16.7	Marceau	1887	10581	15.0
Australia	1886	,,	5600	18.5	Neptune	1887	10581	15.0
Sansparíel	1887	,,	10470	16,7	Magenta	—	—	—
Galatea	1887	,,	5600	18.5				
Victoria	1887	,,	10470	16.7				
Aurora	1887	,,	5600	18.5				
Trafalgar	1887	,,	11940	16.5				
Immortalité	1887	,,	5600	18.5				
Nile	1888	,,	11940	16.5				

*Brennus (French) omitted.—Thomas Symonds.

Copy of Mr. Forwood's List.

(p. 27.)

UNARMOURED CRUISERS COMPLETED.

(LAID DOWN SINCE 1877-78.)

ENGLISH.					FRENCH.			
NAME.	Year launched.	Year finished.	Tons.	Speed.	NAME.	Year launched.	Tons.	Speed.
Constance	1880	1881	2380	13 7	Naïade	1881	3500	14.0
Canada	1881	1883	2380	13.0	Magon	1881	2300	14.1
Cordelia	1881	1884	2380	13.0	Arétheuse	1882	3400	14.0
Satelite	1881	1882	1420	13.1	Primauguet	1882	2400	15.0
Heroine	1881	1882	1420	13.1	Roland	1882	2300	14.5
Hyacinth	1881	1883	1420	13.1	Dubourdieh	1884	3400	14.0
Leander	1882	1885	4300	16.5	Sfax	1884	4188	16.0
Arethusa	1882	1837	4300	16.5	Milan	1884	1510	18.0
Caroline	1882	1886	1420	13.1	Condor	1885	1280	17.0
Phæton	1883	1886	4300	16.5	Epervier	1885	1280	17.0
Amphion	1883	1887	4300	16.5	Duguay Trouin	1887	3300	15.9
Calypso	1883	1885	2770	13.9				
Royalist	1883	1884	1420	13.1				
Rapid	1883	1834	1420	13.1				
Pylades	1834	1885	1420	13.0				
Calliope	1884	1886	2770	13.9				
Mersey	1835	1887	4050	17.0				
Severn	1835	1888	4050	17.0				
Archer	1835	1887	1770	17.0				
Scout	1885	1885	1580	17.0				
Surprise	1885	1886	1650	16.8				
Alacrity	1885	1886	1700	17.0				
Fearless	1886	1887	1580	17.0				
Brisk	1886	1883	1770	17.0				
Cossack	1886	1838	1770	17.0				
Mohawk	1886	1888	1770	17.0				
Porpoise	1886	1838	1770	17.0				
Tartar	1886	1888	1770	17.0				

CRUISERS, Etc., Etc., OMMITTED BY Mr. FORWOOD,

according to Return 17th June, 1888.

	Speed.	Date of Launch.	
Duquesne	16.9	1876	
Tourville	16 9	1876	
Iphiginie	14.0	1881	
Lapcrouse	14.7	1877	10
D'Estaing	15.3	1874	and
Forfait	14.0	1879	
Villars	14.2	1879	5 others.
Nielly	15.0	1880	
Eclaireur	15.0	1877	
10—Rigault de Genouilly	14.3	1876	

Torpedo Vessels

are not named on Mr. Forwood's list, of which there are 8 completed; named at p. 14, Parliamentary Return, with speed 18 knots; admirably calculated for commerce destroyers.

Copy of Mr. Forwood's List.

(p. 28.)

UNARMOURED CRUISERS COMPLETING.

ENGLISH.					FRENCH.			
NAME.	Year launched.	Year finished.	Tons.	Speed.	NAME.	Year launched.	Tons.	Speed.
Thames	1885	1888	4050	17.0	Tage	1886	7045	19.0
Forth	1886	'87-8	4050	17.0	Faucon	1887	1280	17.0
Serpent	1887	Uncertain	1770	17.5 to 18 0	Forbin	1888	1850	19.5
					Cecille	,,	5766	19 0
					Alger	,,	4094	19.0
Racoon	1887	,,	1770	17.5 to 18.0	Jean Bart	,,	4094	19.0
					Isly	,,	4094	19.0
Magicienne	1888	—	2950	19.7	Davoust	,,	2977	19.0
Marathon	,,	—	2950	19.7	Suchet	,,	2977	19.0
Medea	,,	—	2300	20.0	Surcouf	,,	1850	19.5
Medusa	,,	—	2800	20.0	Ironde	,,	1847	19.5
Melpomene	,,	—	2950	19.7	Lalande	,,	1847	19 5
Barrosa	,,	—	1580	16.5	Cosmao	,,	1847	—
Barracouta	,,	—	1580	16.5	Coetlogan	,,	1818	—
Blanche	,,	—	1580	16 5	Vautour	,,	1280	17.0
Blonde	,,	—	1580	16.5	*Dupuy de Lome	,,	—	—
Bellona	,,	—	1800	19.5				
Barham	,,	—	1800	19.5				
Blake	,,	—	9000	22.0				
Blenheim	,,	—	9000	22.0				
Vulcan	,,	—	6000	20.0				
(for Australasia)	,,	—	2575	19 0				
	,,	—	2575	19.0				
	,,	—	2575	19.0				
	,,	—	2575	19.0				
	,,	—	2575	19.0				

* This last is the most powerfully armoured cruiser in the world and is omitted as such but noted, as *unarmoured*. THOMAS SYMONDS.

TORPEDO VESSELS COMPLETING AND BUILDING.

See Return 218, June 12th, /88, p. 14.

"Nil."

I find the above "Nil" in the Return 218, *just* issued, although, "Valeur de la Flotte Rapport," Dec. 1887, as official as our Estimates, gives Tableau B. p. 109, No. 2039,—*Baluy*, *Challier*, *Capitaine Cuuy*, *Mehl*, *Dehorter*, *Deroulède*, *Doudart de Lagrée*, *Bouët Willaumey*, *Edmond-Fontaine*.

New Constructions authorised during 1888.

" Croiseur Blindé."—Dupuy de Lome.
" Croiseurs Torpilleur Avisos."—Bengali, Lézard, Cicogne.
" Avisos Torpilleurs."—Sainte Barbe, Salve.
" E'claireurs Torpilleurs."—3 Ouragan N··· N···.

Why three of these five are omitted in a Parliamentary Return, 218, June 12th, 1888, I cannot conceive.

Mr. Forwood also omits 25 unarmoured cruisers, being before his date, I presume, but *well able to destroy Commerce*.

From list 218, England has in short,
50 fast vessels exceeding 16 knots unarmoured.
France 44.

Too few for safety sake by 72 and for 3 to 1 !

Yours,

Admiral of the Fleet, Thomas Symonds.

Torquay, August 21st, 1888.

I think it my duty in support of my expressed opinions, that our Navy is unfit to cope with France, to examine the character, condition and sea-going power of the 40 armoured ships mentioned by the Secretary of the Admiralty, as ready for service at the time of his speech at Liverpool.

Thunderer, *Superb*, and *Penelope* were not ready—undergoing extensive repairs—*Edinburgh*, *Colossus*, *Alexandra*, *Dreadnought*, *Temeraire*, *Agamemnon*, and *Sultan*, were in the Mediterranean —*Nelson* remains in Australia—*Imperieuse*, *Swiftsure*, *Orlando*, *Bellerophon*, flagships on distant stations—*Audacious* and *Triumph*, returning thence for repairs. This leaves us with 23 armoured vessels in the Channel. Of these, *Hero*, *Conqueror*, *Rodney*, *Collingwood*, *Benbow*, *Bellisle*, *Orion*, *Hotspur*, *Rupert*, are unfit to blockade in all weathers, owing to too low a freeboard: *Black Prince*, *Agincourt*, *Northumberland*, are quite unfit, being thoroughly obsolete, with $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. armour, etc., *Warspite*, *Northampton*, *Shannon*, are Cruisers with Trade protecting duties. There remain eight, *Monarch*, *Hercules*, *Invincible*, *Iron Duke*, *Inflexible*, *Ajax*, with *Devastation* and *Neptune*, which two last I should not trust to blockade in all weathers being too low.—To blockade the Coast of France from Bordeaux to Calais—A manifest absurdity. Beyond the 40 above mentioned, the Secretary named 13 vessels (7 Battle ships and 6 Cruisers) as armoured ships completing. The 7 Battle ships are unfit to blockade, being of too low a free board. The 6 Cruisers have the same fault and thus are unequal to overtake French vessels built after our Transatlantic vessels, which are twice as large and high out of water, (*Normandie* for instance, 10650 tons; coals 1600 tons, with cargo, dead weight, 3000 tons, which might be coals, total 4600 tons of coals,) while our Cruisers cannot carry sufficient coals (900 tons) to steam at full speed to America.

I conclude therefore that our Fleet is not calculated to carry on an efficient blockade or the Cruisers to do their duty, and earnestly hope that the country will see the absolute necessity of building a fleet capable of blockading the Coasts of France and of protecting the Coasts of England, and our food supply, commerce, etc., etc.

Very much is made of the difficulty as to class and type of vessels to be built. We should build vessels of classes, etc., exactly similar to the French, with such additional vessels as the vastly more onerous duties of our Fleet necessitate. As in 1813—Two Battle-ships to one French and three Cruisers to one, is the very least to be in any way satisfactory.

The French built much finer war-ships, at the end of last century and now, than we do.

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET,

TORQUAY, Sept. 6th, 1888. THOMAS SYMONDS.